



Living
LIFE *in*
HIM

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH
solemn²⁰²⁵
assembly

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH
3823 S. INDIANA AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60653
BISHOP HORACE E. SMITH, M.D., PASTOR
SIS. SUSAN D. SMITH, FIRST LADY

Praise the Lord Everyone

Sis Smith and I are excited, and filled with great joy, knowing that you have chosen to join us during Solemn Assembly in 2025.

Solemn Assembly is our annual time of refocusing and reconnecting to God, positioning ourselves to hear from Him, and discovering His Will for us as a congregation.

This devotional is designed to aid you as you join us in this holy endeavor.

Our theme and focus for this time is **Living Life in Him**.

It flows from our FaithWorks 2024 theme of “Lord of All,” and evolves of the concluding phrase of our Mission Statement.....So That CHRIST BECOMES PRE-EMMINENT in every life.

This time will encompass the month of January (and further if the Lord says the same). It is a time of corporately seeking Him in prayer, fasting, scriptural reading, and reflecting. It is a time of study, worship, and repenting. It is a time that we surrender to Him, fully expecting our lives to be changed and transformed individually and collectively.

Please utilize the resources provided on our website to guide you regarding our scheduled times of coming together and our corporate commitments to fasting, prayer, and connecting as a community.

It is my prayer that this Solemn Assembly will impact us like no other. As we open our hearts and minds to the Lord unreservedly, we will experience the Move and Presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit, which will shape our lives forever and empower us to accomplish His Will and Plan for us.

Please share the details of our gatherings, the contents of this devotional, and personal commitment with everyone you can. In this day of isolation and individualism, connecting with and building the faith and experience of others is a critical component of our journey to spiritual maturity and unity.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious unto you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give peace. In Jesus name.

Bishop Horace E. Smith M.D.
Apostolic Faith Church

A Declaration of Christ at the Center and Prayer Points for Season 1: Solemn Assembly

We boldly declare that Jesus is the center of our lives—our hope in times of uncertainty, our source of unshakable joy, and our faithful provider in every need. Lord, we thank You for the work You have done in our hearts, transforming it to desire what pleases You. Thank You for aligning our life with Your perfect will - a will that reveals Your plan, purpose, and desire for us, rooted in Your love and faithfulness.

Father, we ask that You empower us daily by the Holy Spirit to walk fully in Your grace. Help us to live with integrity and faith, reflecting Your love, compassion, and truth in everything we do. Let our words and actions be proof of Your goodness, drawing others closer to You. We surrender our worries and fears to You, trusting that Your ways are higher than ours and that Your timing is perfect. When challenges arise, remind us that Your grace is sufficient and Your power is made perfect in our weakness. Strengthen us to stand firm in our faith, even when the world seeks to distract or discourage us.

Guide our steps so we remain anchored in Your Word, faithful in prayer, and steadfast in trust. May our lives glorify You in all things, fulfilling the divine purpose You have set before us. We commit to living not for ourselves, but for Your glory, as we lean on Your strength and walk in the power of Your Spirit.

In Jesus' name, we declare this truth and surrender our lives to You.
Amen.

JANUARY 5 - 11, 2025

Week 1: Jesus Before Creation

During week 1 of 4, our focus is on Jesus Before Creation. Before the world began, Jesus was already at the center of God's plan. He wasn't a backup plan or a reaction to sin. He was always the plan. Everything was made through Him, and in Him, we find our purpose. This week's devotion will help us:

1. See Jesus as God's Plan from the Beginning

We'll learn how Jesus was chosen before creation and how everything God planned centers on Him. This can help us trust God's plan for our lives more fully.

2. Understand Our Purpose in Christ

We'll discover that just like Jesus, we were chosen as part of God's plan. Knowing this can help us live with confidence and make choices that honor Him.

As we start this journey, let's take time to think about what it means that Jesus was chosen for us and that we were chosen in Him. By the end of this week, we'll better understand how God's plan for Jesus gives our lives purpose and meaning. Let's walk through this week together, ready to grow in our faith and in our connection to Jesus.

Day 1: Chosen Early; Revealed Later

" He is the exact image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation, the eternal. 16 It was by Him that everything was created: the heavens, the earth, all things within and upon them, all things seen and unseen, thrones and dominions, spiritual powers and authorities. 18 He is the head of this body, the church. He is the beginning, the first of those to be reborn from the dead, so that in every aspect, at every view, in everything—He is first. — Colossians 1:15-16a, 18 (The Voice)

In today's scripture, the Apostle Paul declares that Jesus was not only the Creator of all things but also the One through whom God's eternal plan was accomplished. Jesus was chosen before the foundation of the world, not as a reaction to sin but as the central figure of God's eternal purpose. All creation exists through Him and for Him, and in Him, we are also chosen to share in God's divine plan.

This truth emphasizes that God's timing is never reactionary. He does not respond to events in haste or uncertainty but orchestrates His plans with precision and purpose. Long before the world began, God chose Jesus to be the Redeemer and chose us to find our identity and purpose in Him. At the perfect time, Jesus was revealed to fulfill this plan "for our sake" (1 Peter 1:20) NIV, demonstrating God's unfailing love and wisdom.

God's timing may challenge our understanding, as we often desire immediate answers or results. Yet, His plans are always intentional and perfectly timed. Imagine if Jesus had been revealed too early—before the world was ready to receive Him. Even those called to follow Him, like Peter, might not have embraced their roles in God's plan.

Let this truth encourage you today: you are chosen in Christ, and God's work in your life is unfolding according to His perfect timing. Trust Him, worship Him for His eternal wisdom, and live with confidence that His plans for you are as intentional and purposeful as His plan for Jesus' revelation to the world.

Day 2: Holy and Blameless

" But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; —1 Peter 2:9

What is my purpose in life? This question permeates our thoughts and actions. Some seek answers through relationships, striving to be the best parents, siblings, or partners. Others chase career success, hoping prestigious or altruistic jobs will bring fulfillment. But Peter provides a simple, profound answer: We were chosen before the world's creation to be holy and blameless.

Though we often fall short of this purpose—a reality God is fully aware of—it remains central to our lives. Without pursuing this purpose, all other attempts at fulfillment fall flat. Thankfully, through Jesus' example, the Holy Spirit, and God's Word, we have everything we need to pursue holiness and blamelessness.

This leaves us with two questions: (1) Are we willing to accept our God-given purpose? (2) Will we use the tools He provides to fulfill it?

Journal Prompts:

1. What does it mean to be holy and blameless?
2. Reflect on examples of holiness in your life or the lives of biblical figures.
3. Are there areas in your life tainted by sin or carnality?
4. What steps can you take today to move toward holiness?

Prayer Point: Father God, in the name of Jesus, we thank You for choosing us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in Your sight. Your love and grace are beyond measure, and we are humbled by the privilege to be called Your own. Help us to live in a way that reflects Your holiness and to walk in the purpose You have set for us. Through the Holy Spirit, guide us to honor You in all things, growing in grace and truth as we strive to live a life worthy of the calling You have placed on us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3: Christ, the Sacrificial Vessel

"For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake."

—1 Peter 1:18-20 (NLT)

Bishop Smith often reminds us that “we have been bought with a price,” a truth Peter emphasizes to the early church. God’s infinite wisdom and love are demonstrated through Jesus, the sacrificial vessel chosen to redeem us. Before the world began, God’s plan was set in motion, and Jesus was the centerpiece of that plan, our Redeemer and ransom.

Earthly wealth or human efforts could never atone for sin, yet God provided a perfect way for us to become His children through Christ. His shed blood, the ultimate sacrifice, paid the price we could never afford. Throughout the Old Testament, glimpses of Jesus foreshadowed His role as the sacrificial vessel prepared and chosen to bear the weight of our sins.

For our sake, He was revealed in the flesh as the spotless Lamb, chosen to take our place and restore us to God. Let us reflect on the depth of His sacrifice and thank Him for being the vessel through which we are redeemed and made whole.

As Peter reminds us of our rescue from emptiness, let us thank the Lord for the blood that paid it all.

Journal Prompts:

1. What practical steps can you take to live a life that honors Christ’s sacrifice?
2. Are there areas in your life still tied to empty or unfulfilling pursuits?
3. Reflect on how you can realign those areas with God’s purpose.

Prayer Point: Heavenly Father, we come before You in awe and gratitude for the incredible price You paid for our salvation. Thank You for sending Jesus, Your perfect and spotless Lamb, to be our Redeemer. We are humbled by the depth of Your love, that You would sacrifice Your only Son to rescue us from sin and emptiness. I recognize that without You, our life would be devoid of meaning and purpose, but through Christ’s sacrifice, we have been given new life. Thank You for the gift of salvation, and for the blood that paid it all. Help us to live with a heart full of gratitude, always mindful of the great cost of our redemption. May we honor You in all we do, reflecting Your love and grace to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4: Chosen by God

*"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without
"or you are a holy people [set apart] to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out
of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be a people for His own possession [that is, His very
special treasure]" —Deuteronomy 7:6 (AMP)*

Identity and belonging are core struggles for many people. Questions like “Who am I?” and “Do I matter?” often surface in times of uncertainty or insecurity. Thankfully, the Deuteronomy offers us a life-changing truth—God chose us.

Before the foundation of the world, God’s love for us was already established. He not only thought about us but intentionally chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault. What an incredible affirmation of our worth! Through Jesus, we are not only chosen but also purified, allowing us to stand blameless before God (Jude 1:24).

This truth provides unshakable assurance when doubts creep in about our value or purpose. God’s decision to choose us wasn’t random or conditional—it was rooted in His eternal love and divine plan. Yet, being chosen also comes with a call to action. We are called to live holy lives, reflecting God’s love and character to the world.

Will you invite the Holy Spirit today to guide your steps as you seek to honor God?

Journal Prompts:

- 1. What does it mean to you to be “chosen in Christ”?
- 2. How does this verse inspire you to show love and grace to others?
- 3. What practical ways can you remind yourself daily that God chose and loves you?

Prayer Point: Father God, thank You for choosing us before the foundation of the world. Through Christ’s sacrifice, You have made us holy and blameless in Your sight. We are humbled by Your love and grace. Help us to live in a way that reflects Your holiness and fulfills the purpose You’ve set for us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 7: God's Redemption Plan

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. — 2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NIV)

Just as we make intentional plans for our children, finances, and health, God has crafted a plan for our redemption before the world began. From the very beginning, Scripture reveals God’s purposeful design—Jesus was always coming, the Son of David, destined to save us.

God’s plan is not haphazard; it is thoughtful, deliberate, and eternal. Likewise, we are called to approach our faith with intention. Living in Him requires us to plan for growth, discipline, and deeper connection to God’s Word.

What steps can you take today to ensure you are walking in alignment with God’s redemptive plan? How will you prioritize time in prayer, Scripture, and acts of faith?

Journal Prompts:

1. What does it mean to live a life “in Him”?
2. How can you incorporate intentional practices to grow spiritually and deepen your faith?
3. What are some areas where you need God’s guidance to stay on track with His plan?

Prayer Point: Thank You, Father, for always thinking of us before the creation of this world. We ask You to guide me as we continue to grow in faith and purpose. Help us to hear Your voice and follow Your leading. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Week 2: Jesus in and through creation

In week 2 of 4, our focus is on Jesus in and through creation. From the very beginning, Jesus has been at the center of everything, showing us who God is, holding the universe together, and reminding us of His power and authority. As we go through this week, we will see how Jesus, as the Creator and Sustainer, works in the world and in our lives, calling us to reflect His glory.

This week's devotion will help us:

1. Understand Jesus as the Creator and Sustainer

We'll learn that everything was made by Him, through Him, and for Him. This understanding will help us feel awe and gratitude, reminding us that our lives have purpose and were designed by Him.

2. Live as Reflections of His Glory

By thinking about how Jesus works in creation and in us, we'll be encouraged to live in a way that honors Him. Whether it's in our actions, words, or relationships, this week will help us put Jesus at the center of everything we do.

As we reflect on Jesus' role in creation, let's do this together, seeking Him as the One who made us, holds us together, and redeems us. By the end of this week, we'll see more clearly how Jesus works through us to bring glory to God. Let's commit to this journey as a group, living to show His greatness and love in everything we do.

Day 5: Jesus is the Fulfillment of God in the Flesh

“...and to make plain [to everyone] the plan of the mystery [regarding the uniting of believing Jews and Gentiles into one body] which [until now] was kept hidden through the ages in [the mind of] God who created all things.” Ephesians 3:9 AMP

God’s eternal plan of salvation, once hidden, is now revealed through Jesus Christ. It amazes me that I am part of His divine plan and purpose. Knowing this gives my life deeper meaning and compels me to share His love with others. I am reminded that God’s plans are always purposeful, and nothing in my life is accidental. He has always intended for us to be one—united in His love and mission. As we embrace this unity, we are called to live out His purpose together, not in division, but as a reflection of His harmony and grace. Our lives, individually and collectively, are part of His greater design, a beautiful picture of reconciliation and togetherness in Christ.

Journal Prompts:

- 1. What are some ways we can reflect God’s plan for unity in our relationships and community?
- 2. How can we align with God’s vision of unity in Jesus Christ?

Prayer Point: Father, we thank you for revealing your plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. We are deeply grateful to know that nothing you do in our lives is by accident. Help us to see the deeper meaning You’ve woven into our journeys and empower us by your precious Holy Spirit to share Your love with others. Remind us that Your plan is one of unity, and guide us to live in peace with others, reflecting Your grace. May our lives, individually and collectively, be a living testimony of the reconciliation and togetherness found in Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 7: The Suffering Servant Who Bore Our Pain

"He was despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and pain and acquainted with grief; And like One from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or esteem Him. But [in fact] He has borne our griefs, And He has carried our sorrows and pains; Yet we [ignorantly] assumed that He was stricken, Struck down by God and degraded and humiliated [by Him]. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing]; The punishment [required] for our well-being fell on Him, And by His stripes (wounds) we are healed." Isaiah 53:3-5 (AMP)

Isaiah’s prophecy vividly portrays the suffering of Jesus, the Messiah. His rejection, pain, and sacrifice were all part of God’s plan to bring salvation. Reflecting on this, I’m reminded of the depth of His love, which endured the weight of our sins to bring us healing. This sacrifice is a profound display of selfless love.

Journal Prompts:

1. How can I be grateful for His sacrifice and share that love with others?
2. In what ways can I reflect His love and healing in my relationships?

Prayer Point: Lord Jesus, we are humbled by Your love and sacrifice for me. Thank You for bearing our sins and offering us peace and healing through Your blood. Help us to live in gratitude, reflecting Your love in our lives and extending the grace that we have received to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2: The Prince of Peace

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Isaiah 9:6-7 (KJV)

This passage reminds us of the gift of grace that was given to us in Jesus. He is not only our Savior but our ruler, our counselor, and our peace. Reflecting on His role in our lives, we were reminded to surrender all aspects of our lives to Him, trusting in His leadership and peace.

Journal Prompts:

1. What areas in your life have you not fully given to God? Why?
2. Where do you desire peace in your life?

Prayer Point: God, thank You not only for what You have done but for what You are doing in our lives. Help us let go of our insecurities and trust You fully. We want to continue pursuing You relentlessly, knowing that Your will is best for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4: The Suffering Savior

*"But because of our sins He was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment He suffered, made whole by the blows He received."
Isaiah 53:5 (GNTD)*

Jesus' sacrifice for us was a complete act of love and surrender. He willingly bore our sins and took on the suffering that we deserved so that we could be healed and made whole. This not only highlights His love but also calls us to reflect on our own role in suffering as followers of Christ. The Bible teaches that suffering is part of the Christian life. Just as Jesus suffered for us, we are called to share in His sufferings, bearing our crosses daily as we live in obedience and surrender to God's will.

Reflecting on His sacrifice challenges us to consider how we can live in a way that mirrors His selflessness. Are we willing to endure hardship for the sake of righteousness, or to surrender our comforts for the sake of His kingdom?

Journal Prompt:

1. What does sacrifice look like in your life?
2. What areas of your life are you willing to surrender to God even if it involves discomfort or suffering?

Prayer Point: God, We are concerned about every aspect of our lives. Help us to trust You with every decision we make and to reflect Your love and sacrifice daily. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5: Embracing Purpose Through Suffering

"The Lord says, 'It was My will that He should suffer; His death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so He will see His descendants; He will live a long life, and through Him My purpose will succeed.'" Isaiah 53:10 (NKJV)

Jesus knew His purpose and willingly embraced His suffering for the greater good. Reflecting on His clarity and commitment to His assignment, I am reminded to focus on my own purpose, trusting that God has a plan for my life.

Journal Prompt:

1. When was the last time you sat in silence and meditated on God's will for your life?
2. Have you ever written down what God has spoken to you and begun to follow the directions He has given?

Prayer Point: God, thank You for sending Your Son to fulfill Your will. Help us to silence the noise in our lives and to focus on Your voice and purpose. We desire to know You more intimately, Father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY

Christian Education Sunday School

9:00 AM

Sunday Worship & Youth Worship

10:00 AM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study & Youth Bible Study

7:00 PM

ADDRESS

3823 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60653

WEBSITE: AFCCHICAGO.ORG

SOCIAL MEDIA: [@AFCCHICAGO](https://www.instagram.com/AFCCHICAGO)